



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
1151 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT
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WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

April 2, 2001

TO: HONORABLE CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBERS
Board of Land and Natural Resources

FROM: ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY COMMITTEE (ESRC)

Dr. William Steiner, Director, USGS - Biological Resources Division, UH
Mr. Paul Henson, USFWS - Pacific Islands Ecoregion, Honolulu
Mr. Gilbert J. Coloma-Agaran, Chair, Dept. of Land and Natural Resources
Dr. John Harrison, Executive Director, Environmental Center, Univ. of Hawaii
Mr. Jobriath Rohrer, Appointed Member, U.S. Army Ecosystem Prg, Oahu, HI
Mr. Rick Warshauer, Appointed Member, USGS - BRD, Volcano, HI
Dr. Jim Jacobi, USGS - BRD, Hawaii Nat. Park, HI (BRD Representative)
Ms. Gina Shultz, USFWS - Pacific Islands Ecoregion (FWS Representative)
Mr. Paul Conry, Wildlife Program Manager, DOFAW (DLNR Representative)

SUBJECT: ESRC Recommendations regarding the Draft Safe Harbor Agreement and Habitat Management Plan for Koloa (Hawaiian Duck) and Nene (Hawaiian Goose) on Umikoa Ranch, Island of Hawaii and accompanying Draft Incidental Take Permit.

The ESRC has been requested to make recommendations regarding the Draft Safe Harbor Agreement and Habitat Management Plan for Koloa (Hawaiian Duck) and Nene (Hawaiian Goose) on Umikoa Ranch, Island of Hawaii, dated 4/2/01 and accompanying Draft Incidental Take Permit dated 4/2/01. This agreement was prepared by Ducks Unlimited in consultation with Umikoa Ranch and working with the Fish and Wildlife Service as the agency coordinator. The Fish and Wildlife Service has taken the lead in processing the draft agreement and incorporating comments and changes during the review process. A pre-application and a draft agreement were provided to the ESRC for review. ESRC comments were provided to the applicant via the agency coordinator and consultant.

The State of Hawaii Incidental Take Permit was drafted by the Division of Forestry and Wildlife, based on the content of the draft Safe Harbor Agreement, and provided to the ESRC for review and comment. Much of the content, language and format of this agreement and permit were

modeled after a previously developed safe harbor agreement that has undergone review by the Fish and Wildlife Service solicitors, the Hawaii Attorney General and the public.

The ESRC agrees with the purpose and intent of the Draft Safe Harbor Agreement and believes that the proposed actions to create, enhance and manage habitat for the Hawaiian duck and nene will benefit these endangered species. The agreement will result in: 1) the creation and enhancement of a significant amount of habitat for koloa and nene on Hawaii - 2 acres of wetland marsh and 150 acres of riparian and associated uplands 2) removal of predators within the 150 acre tract of enhanced and managed habitat and predator control on 1,000 acres of the Ranch proper, 3) koa reforestation and watershed protection on 1,000 acres of Umikoa Ranch, and 4) increased food plants and weed control in managed habitats. The ESRC believes that implementation of the agreement will provide a net conservation benefit for the environment and species and is expected to establish self-sustaining breeding populations of koloa and nene within the enrolled lands which now only support occasional use by one pair of koloa. The ESRC believes that the agreement meets the conditions of the Hawaii Revised Statute for entering into a Safe Harbor Agreement and the issuance of an Incidental Take Permit.

During the review process, the ESRC discussed and identified the following issues that were subsequently revised or incorporated into the document by the applicant.

1. Control of feral waterfowl. Incorporated into the agreement. The ranch will take the lead on controlling feral waterfowl that may move into ponds with assistance provided by the Division of Forestry and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
2. Removal of predators and non-native birds. A major component of the agreement will be the control of predators in and around ponds and control of non-native species should they become a problem. These sections have been expanded and clarified in the agreement.
3. Habitat management. The Ranch has made a commitment to maintain and manage the pond habitat for the 20-year duration of the agreement. The ranch has also committed to prevent the establishment of problematic alien invasive species in the pond areas.
4. Clarification of Fish and Wildlife Service and DOFAW responsibilities. The ESRC discussed the role of the natural resource management agencies in implementing the agreement. One issue was whether the agreement should incorporate additional habitat management actions by the agencies on adjacent lands. The agency representatives maintained that the agreement should focus on the commitments of the landowner to implement the agreement and should not require additional mitigation or management by federal or state agencies unless specifically committed to by those agencies. The draft agreement outlines the respective responsibilities of the landowner, Service and the State and does not require additional commitments for habitat management by the agencies on adjacent lands. However, both agencies indicated a commitment to recovery of waterbirds on the Big Island and will work to create and manage additional habitat as resources permit.

The ESRC recommends that the Board favorably consider both the Draft Safe Harbor Agreement and the Draft Incidental Take Permit and release the Draft Safe Harbor Agreement and Incidental Take Permit for the public review process.

Prepared and Submitted by:

PAUL J. CONRY
Wildlife Program Manager
Division of Forestry and Wildlife